

# Wayne Allard

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Contact: Angela de Rocha at (202) 224-5944

## **CONGRESS APPROVES ALLARD BUDGET REQUEST FOR FINAL \$3.4 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR SAND DUNES/ BACA RANCH ACQUISITION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congress has voted to approve the 2005 Omnibus spending bill that includes \$3.4 million for creation of the Baca Ranch Wildlife Refuge adjacent to the Great Sand Dunes National Park in southern Colorado.

“This area is one of the most stunningly picturesque regions of America, teeming with diverse plant- and wildlife,” Senator Allard said. “This funding will provide the final segment of the combined national park and wildlife sanctuary. It has been my great pleasure to work on this project.”

Senator Allard has helped to secure more than \$30 million in funding for the project, culminating with this appropriation for the Baca Ranch acquisition.

The Baca Ranch, at just over 151 square miles, is one of the largest, unfragmented landscapes in the state. It encompasses entire watersheds of a number of streams – from their headwaters in the alpine tundra of the Sangre de Cristo Range to the salt desert-shrub lands on the valley floor. The ranch harbors important wildlife, including vast elk herds and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds such as sandhill cranes and white-faced ibis.

The property ranges in elevation from 7,500 feet on the valley floor to 14,165 feet at the top of Kit Carson Peak. The Ranch has been subject to numerous threats of water development that could have drained the valley’s aquifer which supply water for agriculture as well as wetlands. Valley residents grew tired of the threats and united behind efforts to purchase the Baca Ranch and incorporate it into the newly created Great Sand Dunes National Park.

“The beauty and diversity of the Baca Ranch region offers Coloradans – and all Americans – the chance to visit one of the most fascinating geologic areas in North America,” Senator Allard said. “This funding will provide for final step in the creation of our nation’s newest national park.”